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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3490
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3144
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 3353
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 001612

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA, PM/FO
P FOR DRUSSELL, RRANGASWAMY
USUN FOR KHALIZAD/WOLFF/SCHEDLEBAUER
NSC FOR ABRAMS/YERGER/MCDERMOTT/RAMCHAND
AID FOR BEVER/SCOTT
OSD FOR EDELMAN/LONG/STRAUB/DALTON
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/10/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [OVIP](#) [ASEC](#) [SY](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: LEBANON: RECOMMENDATION ON INTERNATIONAL ELECTION
OBSERVATION

REF: BEIRUT 1591

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

Summary

1. (C) After consulting with Lebanese governmental contacts, local NGOs and international donors, Embassy Beirut recommends that USAID provide funding to support an international observation team through the National Democratic Institute (NDI). With extensive experience in Lebanon working with domestic election observation organizations, NDI is uniquely positioned to effectively carry out this mission. USAID/Lebanon is preparing to request via a Congressional Notification early release of USD one million from FY09 Democracy and Governance funds for this purpose. End Summary.

Support for US. Observer Mission

2. (C) During the last few months, post has spoken at length with Interior Minister Baroud as well as March 14 contacts about international election observers. At a recent meeting for donors (reftel), we learned that the European Union was planning to send an observer mission. Baroud said that other international observer missions would likely be welcomed, as well. He did, however, clarify that all missions would have to be approved by the Council of Ministers and this would likely not occur until after January 2009.

3. (C) UNDP Country Director Marta Ruedas also informed us that the Arab League will likely send a monitoring group. In her opinion, the main focus of this group will be to ensure that the security agreements reached in Doha are maintained during the election. She does not believe that the team will focus on other aspects of electoral monitoring.

4. (C) In conversations with the Ambassador and a variety of USG visitors in recent weeks, March 14 political contacts have also indicated a desire for U.S. and other international observers. In fact, the enthusiastic response had to be tempered with a bit of reality as it was explained that this

effort would not involve "thousands of monitors on the ground" as March 14 would like to see, but would follow the model used in other international elections in which a representative sample of sites were examined in close detail.

NDI Has the Expertise

15. (C) The National Democratic Institute, in partnership with MEPI, DRL and AID, has been working for several years to build the capacity of local organizations such as the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE). Post believes that a USG-supported international observer mission implemented by NDI will be sensitive to these considerations and will partner with, rather than overshadow, the local partners. USAID/Lebanon will request that USD one million in FY09 Democracy and Governance funds for Lebanon be released early via Congressional Notification to support this initiative under the existing USAID Consortium for Elections and Political Processes (CEPPs) agreement.

SISON